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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**South Dakota National Guard unit will mobilize for deployment**

RAPID CITY, S.D. (11/28/07) – Soldiers from Detachment 48, Operational Support Airlift Command, South Dakota Army National Guard have received orders to deploy for a six to 12-month overseas tour in support Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

Detachment 48 is based in Rapid City at the Army Aviation Support Facility next to the Rapid City Regional Airport. The unit is comprised of five pilots and two operations specialists, who will travel to Fort Benning, Ga., in early February, 2008, to complete the mobilization process prior to deployment to Afghanistan.

“The Soldiers within the detachment are highly qualified,” said Chief Warrant Officer Jerry Duba, commander of the detachment. “Our pilots have an average of more than 15-years of aviation experience and our operations specialists are two of the best.”

The detachment will provide aviation support to units throughout Afghanistan by flying two high-performance C-12 Huron aircraft. While overseas, the unit expects to be stationed at Bagram Air Base, 27 miles north of Kabul, where the detachment will operate the two aircraft that are already in place.

Each aircraft is capable of transporting up to eight personnel or other types of high-value cargo. The C-12 is a pressurized fixed-wing aircraft and powered by a twin-engine turboprop system. The Soldiers who fly this aircraft provide a rapid-response delivery system to units throughout the region, delivering various cargos including personnel, vital repair parts, or lifesaving medical supplies.

“I have a quality group that I’m taking over there,” said Duba, who has more than 4,000 hours of flight time his 26 years of being an Army aviator. “This team takes back seat to no one as far as their work ethic, and we are looking forward to taking care of the people we will be supporting.”

Since Sept. 11, the South Dakota National Guard has mobilized more than 3,100 Soldiers and 700 Airmen in support of the Global War on Terror.

More than 140 Soldiers and Airmen from the South Dakota National Guard are currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. More than 4,000 National Guard men and women are still serving in a non-active duty status in South Dakota and continue to provide support for state and national emergencies and homeland defense.

- 30 -

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